



City of Gaithersburg Press Release

Contact: Public Information Director
City of Gaithersburg
301-258-6310
cityhall@gaithersburgmd.gov

For Immediate Release

Innovative, Sustainable Green Practices Recognized with Gaithersburg Environmental Awards

Gaithersburg, MD (April 21, 2020) As part of Green Month, the City of Gaithersburg recognizes individuals and organizations demonstrating outstanding environmental stewardship in the Gaithersburg community with Environmental Awards. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, award winners are being highlighted virtually on social media on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @GburgMD.

Virtual Green Month activities include the debut of the new sustainability newsletter, Green in Gaithersburg, and an Earth Day celebration on social media. Subscriptions to the newsletter are available through the City's [website](#).

For this year's Environmental Awards, the City's Environmental Affairs Committee selected eleven achievement winners and three certificate of appreciation recipients, including businesses and nonprofit and faith-based organizations. Collectively, the winners are growing our local green economy, improving their business models with sustainable initiatives, working within their neighborhoods, and inspiring a new green generation.

Achievement Award Winners

The **Izaak Walton League** is recognized for efforts to protect Gaithersburg's local water resources by raising awareness through its Winter Salt Watch Program, which helps any resident become a scientist and monitor the water quality in their neighborhood. In wintery conditions, road salt is vital to create safe roadways, but it should be used responsibly. Once chloride enters the waterways it can't be filtered out.

In 2019, **Fitzgerald Auto Mall** of Gaithersburg got 90% of its energy supply from the solar panels installed on its parking garage. Despite the struggles the recycling industry faced, the company still managed to divert waste and reduce trash pickups by 25%. Fitzgerald Auto Mall is recognized for these efforts.

-more-

2 – 2 – 2/Environmental Awards

Asbury Methodist Village (AMV) reduced the amount of trash they generated in 2019 by more than 863,000 pounds. To achieve this impressive accomplishment, the team at AMV introduced food waste compost collection into the residential dining hall. It was so popular that by early 2020 they expanded the program to independent living residents.

In 2019, the **Muddy Branch Alliance (MBA)** welcomed its first junior board member. This high school student helped broaden the organization's perspective and engagement. Along with three other interns, the MBA continues to be a leader in engaging residents about local environmental initiatives. Learn more about the MBA at its many events or through the Lands Green Waters Clean program.

Mike Dieterich, Energy and Sustainability Manager at **AstraZeneca**, helps lead the company to sustainable action. In 2020 the Gaithersburg Campus announced a Zero Carbon Ambition by 2020. Despite growth, even with a large campus, AstraZeneca is well on its way to being a waste-free campus thanks to the implementation of composting. The company is recognized for its energy efficiency upgrades and an effort to engage all employees in sustainability initiatives.

Individual Awards

For many years, **John and Judy Briggs** have been cleaning up trash in Gaithersburg and the surrounding communities, keeping a tally of bottles and cans picked up at each location. Since 2014, John and Judy have collected more than 36,483 bottles and cans, nearly 500 pounds of waste that could have wound up in City streams, the Chesapeake Bay and the ocean. The Briggs have also enthusiastically participated in the annual Kelley Park cleanup since its inception.

Shannon Sanchez's busy schedule and twin toddlers made driving down to the compost drop off site burdensome, but she knew how incredibly important composting is for her twins' future. She wanted something closer to her home, so she reached out to her HOA and a local compost hauler and made it happen. Thanks to Shannon, Kentlands residents can enjoy their own communal drop off site as well as reduced cost for curbside compost service.

Deborah "Deby" Sarabia recruited 16 residents to support the Whetstone Run Tributary Clean-up she organized in 2019. She used the opportunity to educate her fellow residents about the interconnectedness of our waterways and why these clean ups matter. Deby is a conservation landscape enthusiast, certified weed warrior, and the current President of the Seneca Creek Watershed Partner.

Tarun Senthil, an 8th grader at Robert Frost Middle School, provided an important youth perspective on City of Gaithersburg parks. He spent the year visiting each of the City's 26 parks, making notes and taking pictures. Tarun is putting together a final report and he encourages others to explore what the parks have to offer.

Frank Willard, a Poolesville High School student and President of the Poolesville High School Bay Coalition, has been a diligent advocate of the Muddy Branch over the last year. He monitored and recorded the salt levels in the Muddy Branch stream and worked on various clean up events, including organizing other students to support clean up and trail work activities.

-more-

3 – 3 – 3/Environmental Awards

Beckie St. John is a leader promoting environmental initiatives, educating residents and broadening engagement in a variety of environmental issues. Beckie leads the local chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby and is the founder of Gaithersburg Green Drinks, a monthly program hosted at different local businesses around the City. The Green Drinks program brings people together to discuss community environmental ideas and actions that can be taken to improve our common living space.

Appreciation Awards

As part of their Eagle Scout Project **Austin Mao, Boy Scout Troop 291**, and **Colin Stark, Boy Scout Troop 1325**, led their troops in the construction of park kiosks at Malcom King Park and the Lakelands entrance to the Muddy Branch Trail to help engage City residents in the natural world. For this effort, Austin and Colin are both recognized with Environmental Appreciation awards.

The **St. Rose of Lima Eco-Action Team** has provided outlets for education and exploration of environmental issues. In 2019, the Team coordinated tours of the Montgomery County Material Recovery Facility and the Shady Grove Transfer Station. They also hosted a green screen event featuring a documentary that sparked conversation among attendees.

For more information on the City of Gaithersburg's environmental programs please contact the Environmental Services Division at 301-258-6370 or e-mail environment@gaithersburgmd.gov.

###